

98-413

Lake Francis Grange #745
P. O. Box 76
Dobbins, CA 95935
November 23, 1998

Mr. Lester Snow
Executive Director CALFED
1416 Ninth St. Suite 1155
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Snow:

At our November 20 meeting we discussed recent pressure from some environmental groups to have the Englebright Dam in Yuba County destroyed. We concluded that doing this will cause more harm than good. We believe that the costs involved far outweigh any benefits that might be realized. In our economically depressed county the impact of losing this dam will be devastating.

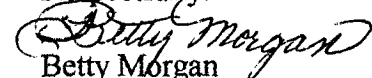
In Yuba County our most significant resources include agriculture, water and recreational opportunity. Englebright Dam, built in 1941 to hold sediment washed down from gold mining operations, is also providing additional benefits. These include regulating water temperatures and flow, and providing clean hydroelectric power, recreation for our citizens and water storage for wildland fire suppression.

Removal of the Englebright Dam will be detrimental in many ways. The dam enhances Yuba River fisheries through its role in controlling water flows and temperatures. A massive release of stored sediment currently retained by the dam could cause ecological disaster. The cost of hauling the sediment away, in addition to the other costs involved with removal of the dam, could virtually bankrupt the Yuba County Water Agency which is responsible for it. Also public safety will be compromised from losing a strategically located wildland fire break and suppression resource, and our faltering economy will suffer from the loss of hydroelectric power generation revenues and tourism dollars.


But beyond all this our Grange members, as advocates for agriculture, recognize the seriousness of increased future demands for water and the predictions of inadequate supply. The Yuba County Water Agency is a well managed and responsible organization that can be of great benefit to both our county and state in meeting future requirements. As we have already implied, our water agency's operating procedures have actually proven to be ecologically beneficial to the Yuba River. Its future strength and viability will be crucial in providing the water needed for agriculture as well as for domestic consumption and recreation. Regardless of any other factors, we must provide food for our people.

For the reasons we have stated, and especially in support of future agricultural needs, we believe that dealing our water agency the crippling blow that the costs of removing the Englebright Dam would deliver are not in the best interests of anyone. We therefore respectfully request your support of our position in saving the Englebright Dam.

Respectfully:


Betty Morgan

Secretary, Lake Francis Grange


Richard Dahms

Master, Lake Francis Grange